

# Winter Weather Preparedness Week

## Indiana Winter Weather Preparedness Week—November 10-16, 2019

Governor Eric Holcomb has proclaimed November 10-16, 2019 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week in Indiana.

As cold and snow begin in earnest across Indiana, the National Weather Service (NWS), Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Indiana State Police (ISP), American Red Cross and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) are encouraging Hoosiers to prepare now for what could be a cold and snowy winter. Preparedness Week is your reminder that you need to be ready for the hazards winter brings. Let's

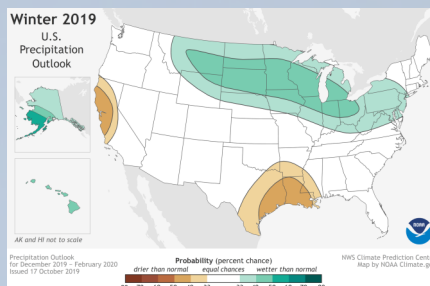
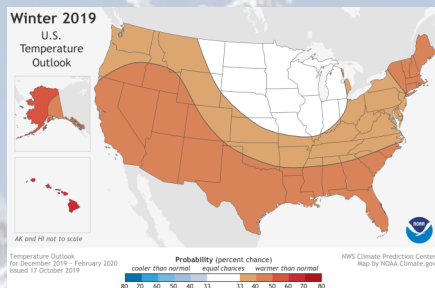
do our part to lead us toward a Weather Ready Nation. Officials from each organization will be available for interviews to help you better understand the outlook for this winter, what preparation plans are being made, and how citizens can be ready.

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## Winter 2019-2020 Outlook

The official outlook from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center (CPC) is calling for odds favoring equal chances for near, above or below normal temperatures and above normal precipitation.



The CPC uses a combination of techniques to derive their forecasts, which includes looking at current states of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans as well as statistical analysis tools and trends in the historical data. The outlook maps provide a probability forecast based on the analysis. Equal chances (EC) indicate that an area has a 33.3% chance of experiencing above, near or below normal temperatures and precipitation. The EC category is often used when there is no strong signal as to what may occur.

This winter, conditions indicate a signal for a neutral El Niño (a warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean waters). While the ENSO climate pattern often influences the winter, neutral conditions are in place this year and expected to

persist into the spring. In the absence of El Niño or La Niña, long-term trends become a key predictor for the outlook, while other climate patterns will likely play a larger role in determining winter weather. Average winter high temperatures range from the lower 30s in northern Indiana to the low and mid 40s in southern portions of the state. Lows typically range from the upper teens to the mid and upper 20s from north to south across the state. Annual snowfall averages from 15 to 20 inches over far southwest Indiana to over 70 inches in some areas near Lake Michigan.

Additional factors such as the NAO (North Atlantic Oscillation), the AO (Arctic Oscillation), the PDO (Pacific Decadal Oscillation) and the EPO (East Pacific Oscillation) are likely to have an impact on the weather this winter but can only be forecast a few weeks in advance with any reasonable skill. Always check for the latest updates, which are issued near the beginning and middle of each month, CPC outlooks are available at <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>.

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### Inside this issue:

Winter Weather Words	2
Severe Weather during Winter	3
Be Red Cross Ready	4
Preparedness for Schools	5
Winter Driving Safety	6
Indiana Travel Advisory Map	7
Winterizing your Vehicle	8
Safe Alternate Heating	9
What to Do if Stranded	10
NWS on Social Media	11



## Winter Weather Words... What to Listen For

**Winter Storm Watch**—alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, an ice storm, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a winter storm.

**Winter Storm Warning**—issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

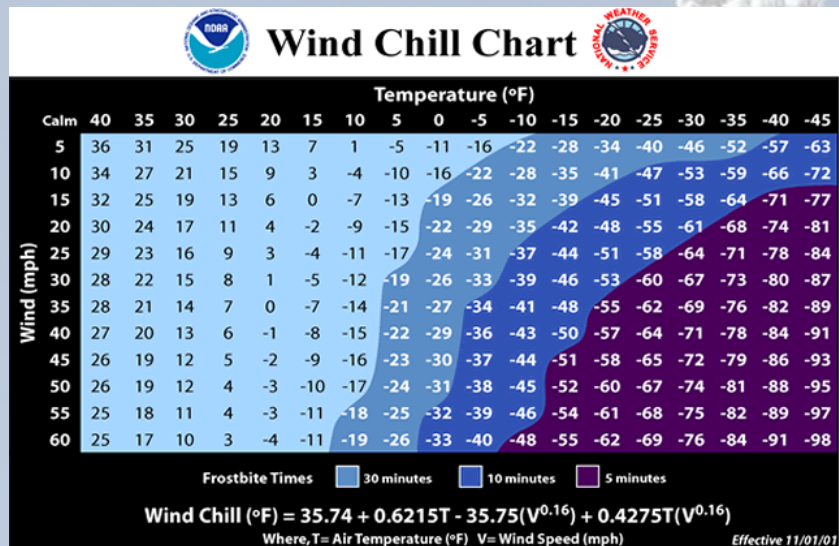
**Ice Storm Warning**—An Ice Storm Warning is issued when significant and damaging ice accumulations (usually one quarter inch or more) are expected.

**Blizzard Warning**— for winds/ gusts in excess of 35 mph reducing visibility to 1/4 mile from snow for 3+ hours.

**Advisories**— issued for weather events that are hazardous, but not severe enough to warrant a warning. Advisories may be issued for snow, blowing snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, wind chill or wind, dense fog or freezing fog.

## Frostbite

Frostbite is damage to body tissue caused by extreme cold. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately! If you must wait for help, slowly re-warm the affected areas. However, if the person is also showing signs of hypothermia, warm the body core before the extremities.



## Hypothermia: Low Body Temperature

**Warning signs**— Uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion.

**Detection**— Hypothermia occurs when the body temperature drops below 95°F. If a person's temperature is below 95°F, seek medical care immediately! If medical care is not available, begin warming the person slowly. Warm the body core before

the extremities (arms and legs). Warming the arms and legs first drives cold blood toward the heart and can lead to heart failure. If needed, use your own body heat to help. Get the person into dry clothing and wrap them in a warm blanket, covering the head and neck. **Do not give the person alcohol, drugs, coffee, or any hot beverage or food; warm broth is better.**





## Winter Brings More Than Just Snow...



**Snowstorm brought over a foot of snow to central and northern IN with wind chills to 40 below zero, making travel dangerous on Jan. 5-6, 2014**

*Photo courtesy of NWS Indianapolis*



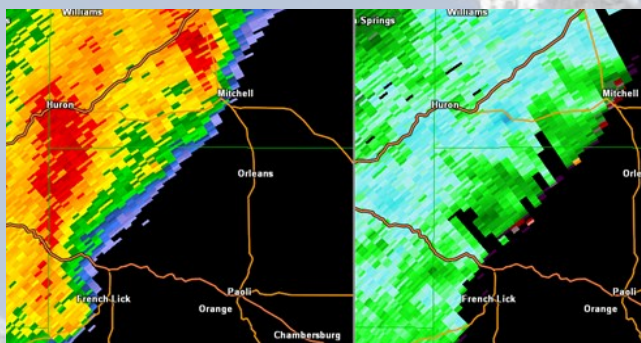
**Winds gusting up to 66 mph created estimated 25 foot waves along southern Lake Michigan Dec. 20-21, 2012**

*Photo courtesy of NWS N. Indiana*



**Ice and snow storm causes widespread power outages in central Indiana on Feb. 1-2, 2011.**

*Photo courtesy Mike Curran*



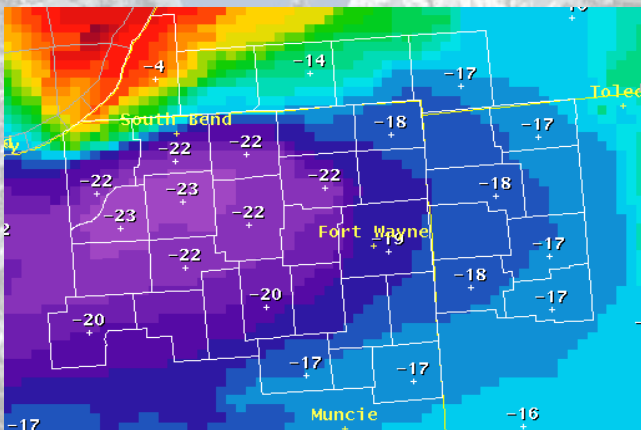
**7 tornadoes, southern IN, Feb 28, 2017**

*NWS Louisville Radar*



**"Chicago Blizzard" drops as much as 2 feet of snow in the southern Great Lakes and brings several inches of sleet to most of Indiana Feb. 1-2, 2011**

*Photo courtesy NWS N. Indiana*



**Record cold temperatures blast Northern Indiana on Jan. 16, 2009.**

*Photo courtesy NWS N. Indiana*



## A Kit for Your Home

- Food and Water for 3 days (1 gallon of water per person per day)
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery– powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- First aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply) and medical items
- Extra Cash
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Emergency blanket



## Stay Safe and Warm at Home

- Use only portable heating equipment approved for indoor use and monitor it closely, especially around children. Turn it off and unplug if you leave or go to bed.
- Keep combustible materials (clothing, furniture, drapes, etc.) at least 3 feet from the heat source. Never drape clothes over a space heater to dry.
- Do not use a stove or oven to heat rooms.
- Don't overload electrical circuits
- The American Red Cross offers free home smoke alarm installations. The Home Fire Campaign aims to reduce home fire deaths and injuries by 25%. For more information, visit [www.redcross.org/local/indiana/about-us/home-fire-campaign.html](http://www.redcross.org/local/indiana/about-us/home-fire-campaign.html)
- Looking to sign up for a free smoke alarm? Sign up here: [indianaregion-reporting.wufoo.com/forms/r648xkeQwst1kx/](http://indianaregion-reporting.wufoo.com/forms/r648xkeQwst1kx/)

## NOAA All Hazards Radio



Keep ahead of the storm by listening to NOAA Weather Radio for the latest winter storm watches, warnings, and advisories. In addition to routine broadcasts, the Specific Area message Encoding (SAME) feature of NOAA Weather Radio Activates the Emergency Alert System (EAS). EAS is used to provide

notifications of emergencies to the public. Blizzard and most other winter warnings will be distributed through the EAS.

**Did you know??**  
Special needs NOAA Weather Radios designed to meet the needs of the hearing impaired are available. For more infor-

mation, visit:  
[www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/info/special\\_needs.html](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/info/special_needs.html)

For more information, visit:  
[www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/)



## Winter Weather Preparedness for Schools

### Gathering Information

- Know where to get weather information: Utilize NOAA Weather Radio, local media sources, and internet.
- Know how and where to get road information: Highway Departments or Law Enforcement are often your best sources for road conditions. City and county transportation or school officials, and drives or security teams are also excellent sources.

### Alerting Staff, Students, and Family

- Take action, spread the word: Mobile communications for bus drivers; email/text/phone messages to families/staff; announcements in school.

### Activating a Plan

- Determine when to activate a plan: Gather information about the type of winter storm, expected impact, and time of impact on the school district.

### Canceling or Delaying Classes

- Determine when to cancel or delay classes: How much time do you have before the storm impacts the area? Not only must students be transported to school safely, but also back home via bus, car, or on foot. What kind of an impact will the storm make? Will roads be impassable or will road conditions just have a minimal effect on transportation of students, causing only small delays?

### School Bus Driver Actions

- For heavy snow or blowing and drifting snow: Be familiar with alternate routes, stay up to date on the latest forecast, and maintain communication with school officials.
- For ice storms: Remain alert for downed trees, utility lines, and other road hazards. Be familiar with alternate routes. Stay up to date on the forecast and maintain communication with school officials.
- For extreme cold: Recognize and train for treating symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite.

### Safety Instruction

- Educate school staff and students: Conduct drills and hold safety programs annually.
- Participate in Winter Weather Preparedness Week campaigns.
- Contact your local Emergency Manager or National Weather Service office for a speaker to discuss winter weather safety.



## Winter Injuries

### Related to Ice and Snow:

- About 70% occur in automobiles
- About 25% are people caught out in the storm
- Majority are males over 40 years old

### Related to Exposure to Cold:

- 50% are people over 60 years old
- Over 75% are males
- About 20% occur inside the home



## Winter-Wise Driving Tips: Safe Spacing for Plow Drivers & Others

- Pay attention to weather reports on the radio. Allow time in your schedule for bad weather and/or traffic delays.
- Become familiar with your vehicle's winter weather operating characteristics. Front-wheel drive vehicles generally handle better than rear-wheel vehicles on slippery roads because the weight of the engine is on the drive wheels, improving traction.
- Keep your windows clear of snow and ice. Remember to clean head, tail, and brake lights
- If you need to turn on your wipers, you need to turn on your headlights
- Bridges become slick and icy before roads. Bridge temperatures can be 5 to 6 degrees colder than roadways, so drive with extreme caution during freezing temperatures
- Keep your gas tank at least half full. Fill the tank before you park for lengthy periods of time. This will help prevent fuel line freeze-ups
- Leave ample stopping time between you and the vehicle in front of you. Breaking distance can be up to nine times greater on snowy, icy surfaces than on dry roads
- If your vehicle is equipped with anti-lock breaking system (ABS), be sure to: STOMP firmly—depress the brake pedal, STAY on the breaks—do not pump the brakes, STEER where you want the vehicle to go
- Gently pump non-ABS brakes to stop the vehicle. Take any corrective action gradually. You need to maintain full control of the vehicle. Refer to the vehicle operations manual for proper methods to correct skids
- During winter travel, it is best to supply those at your destination with the following information: your cell phone number, departure time, travel route, and anticipated arrival time
- Lock your vehicle, even in bad weather. If locks freeze, heat the key. Do not pour hot water on the locks—they will refreeze
- Stay with your vehicle while warming it up. An unattended, running car invites theft

**For  
information  
on winter  
safety tips for  
the vehicle,  
visit the  
INDOT website  
at [www.in.gov/  
indot/2439.htm](http://www.in.gov/indot/2439.htm) or  
the IDHS  
website at  
[www.getprepared.in.gov](http://www.getprepared.in.gov)**

## Survival Tips if Stranded

- **The best advice is to remain with the vehicle. If nothing else, you are guaranteed shelter**
- Tie a bright colored cloth (handkerchief, towel, etc.) to the vehicle's antenna, driver door handle or outside mirror
- Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow. Poisonous gases can filter into the vehicle if the pipe is clogged
- Run the engine and heater no more than 10 minutes every hour, leaving a downwind window slightly open for ventilation while the engine is running
- Light a flare or turn on a flashlight to let others know you're stranded in the vehicle
- Use floor mats, seat covers and blankets for added warmth. If you must leave your vehicle during a severe snow storm or blizzard, secure a lines of rope or cord to yourself and the vehicle to avoid becoming lost or disoriented
- Keep bottled water in your vehicle's emergency kit. Never eat snow. It will chill you and lower your body temperature
- Remain calm. Chances for rescue are better if you remain calm and in your vehicle



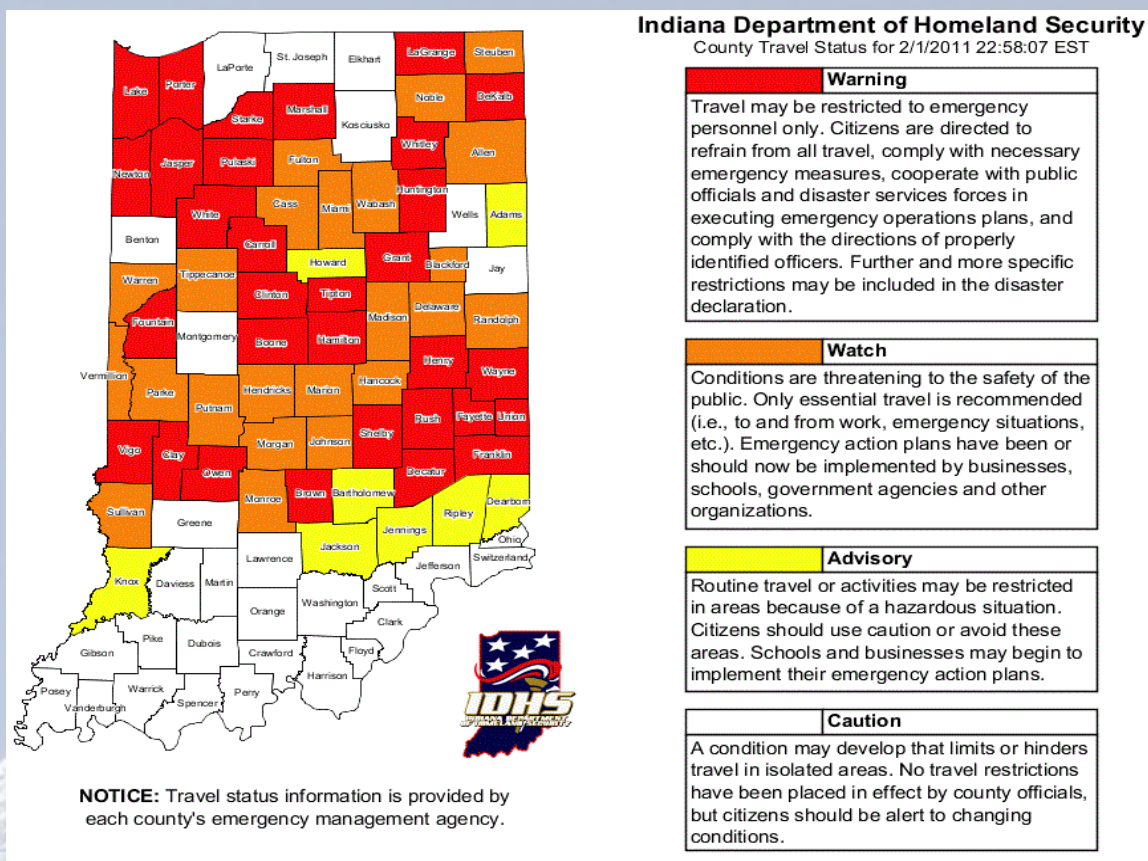


## Indiana County Travel Advisories Map

Indiana's travel advisory statutes use a three tiered system statewide. All counties in Indiana will be following the same guidelines for travel advisories, under state law.

The first level is a travel advisory, which tells drivers whether conditions may make travel difficult. The second level will be a travel watch, which recommends only essential travel on the roadways. The highest level is a travel warning, which means travel may be forbidden.

This law removed language for warning levels which varied in meaning from county to county and thus makes for more unified terminology.



Example of County Travel Advisories map from February 1-2, 2011 snowstorm.

## County Travel Advisories Map

[www.in.gov/dhs/traveladvisory](http://www.in.gov/dhs/traveladvisory)

## INDOT Road Information

[indot.carsprogram.org](http://indot.carsprogram.org)

[pws.trafficwise.org](http://pws.trafficwise.org)

800-261-ROADS



## How to Winterize Your Vehicle



- Check tire pressure and tread depth. Consult your owner's manual for advice. Look for uneven wearing which can also be dangerous. Be sure to check the square tire and make sure the jack is operating properly.
- Check battery, exhaust system, heater and defroster. Make sure the battery is not past its lifespan, and that the terminals are tight and free of corrosion. Hoses and belts should be inspected for cracks. Now is the time to discover if your heater is broken—not when the temperature drops.
- Check antifreeze. Make sure that a 50% antifreeze, 50% water mixture is at the proper radiator level. If the coolant is two years old, get it flushed and refilled.
- Change oil every 3,000 to 5,000 miles. Consider using a lighter, "winter weight" oil. Refer to your owner's manual for guidance.
- Check windshield wiper and blades. Replace the blades twice a year and make sure extra WINTER wiper fluid is on hand.
- Ensure the four-wheel drive system and breaks are functioning properly.

***“Try to keep at least a half tank of gas in your car during the winter”***

## Prepare an Emergency Kit for your Vehicle

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| ⇒ At least 2 blankets or a sleeping bag                     | energy foods (granola bars, raisins, nuts, peanut butter, or cheese crackers)                 | vehicle use   |
| ⇒ Flashlight or battery-powered lantern and extra batteries | ⇒ Thermos or container that won't allow liquids to freeze                                     | ⇒ Ice scraper and snow brush  |
| ⇒ Jumper cables   | ⇒ First-aid kit and necessary medications   | ⇒ Tire repair kit and pump  |
| ⇒ Extra clothing, particularly boots, hats, and mittens     | ⇒ Sand or non-clumping cat litter for tire traction if your vehicle gets stuck in snow or ice | ⇒ Candle, matches, heat sticks/packs, lighters, hand-warmers, etc. Be sure to crack the window if you are using a heat source inside the vehicle. |
| ⇒ A steel shovel and rope to use as a lifeline              | ⇒ A cell phone charger which can be adapted to  |   |
| ⇒ Bottled water or juice and nonperishable high-            |   |   |



Try to keep at least a half tank of gas in your car during the winter months. Even with the best maintenance & cautious driving, snow, ice, & freezing temperatures can sometimes still get the best of your vehicle. Hazardous winter driving conditions induce crashes, which are the leading cause of death during winter storms. Being prepared to handle potential slide-offs, crashes, & car trouble in winter is a simple but crucial step to take in preparing for the next few months.



## Tips for Safe Alternative Heating

- Keep all flammable materials at least 3 feet away from heating equipment
- Regular cleaning and annual inspections by a professional chimney sweep will help keep a fireplace free from obstructions and creosote which was the leading factor contributing to home heating fires between 2009 and 2013 according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Use only paper or kindling wood, not a flammable liquid, to start a fire
- Use only dry, seasoned wood in a fireplace or wood stove to avoid the buildup of creosote. Do not use artificial logs in wood stoves
- If using a gas fireplace, ensure the fireplace vents properly and that there is a functioning carbon monoxide detector in the room
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand and know how to use them

## Space Heater Safety

- When buying a new space heater, make sure it carries the mark of an independent testing laboratory and is legal for use in our community
- Use the proper grade of fuel for your liquid-fueled space heater and never use gasoline in any heater not approved for gasoline use
- Refuel space heaters only in a well ventilated area and when the equipment is cool
- Plug power cords only into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord
- Turn off space heaters whenever the room they are in is unoccupied

## Tips for Reducing Heating Costs

- Make sure your home is properly insulated
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to keep out cold air
- Install a programmable thermostat and set it to lower the temperature at night and whenever the house is unoccupied
- Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible, including overhead doors on attached garages
- Insulate the pipes around the water heater with inexpensive, easy-to-install pipe insulation
- Always unplug holiday lights before going to bed or leaving the house

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***The National Fire Protection Association said heating equipment was the 2nd leading cause of home fire deaths in the US from 2009 to 2013***

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***Among fatal home heating fires, the leading factor contributing to the ignition of the fires was heating equipment stationed too close to flammable materials.***

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***For more information about winter heating safety, visit [www.getprepared.in.gov](http://www.getprepared.in.gov). For additional emergency efficiency and money saving tips contact your local utility company or visit [www.energy.gov/energysaver](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver)***

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*December 26-28,  
2012*

*An intense snow storm dumped 4 inches to over a foot of snow in central and southern Indiana on Dec. 26th. Powerful winds gusted to greater than 40 mph as the snowfall peaked. Two days later another system dropped an additional 3 to 8 inches over the same region.*

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*January 7-8, 2011*

*A record breaking lake effect snow event dropped 3 feet of snow on South Bend, In with 8 inches in 1 hours and 19 inches in 4 hours. A widespread area of 1-2 feet of snow occurred in the surrounding counties.*

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*February 1-2, 2011*

*The “Chicago Blizzard” brought over a foot of snow to many locations in northern Indiana, 1.5 inches of freezing rain and sleet to central Indiana, and winds greater than 50 mph across the entire state. Drivers were stranded on Lakeshore Dr. in Chicago where over 20 inches of snow fell.*

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## **What to Do if You’re Caught in a Winter Storm**

### **At Home or in a Building**

**Stay inside:** When using alternative heat from a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc., use fire safeguards and ventilate properly.

**If you have no heat:**

- Close off unneeded rooms
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors
- Cover windows at night

**Eat and Drink:** Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration

**Wear layers of loose-fitting, light weight, warm clothing:** Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration, and subsequent chill

### **In a Car or Truck**

**Stay in your vehicle:** Disorientation occurs quickly in wind-driven snow and cold.

**Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat:**

- To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, open the window a little for fresh air
- Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked

**Be visible to rescuers:**

- Turn on your dome light at night when running the engine
- Tie a colored cloth (preferably red) to your antenna or door
- After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help

**Exercise from time to time by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers, and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.**

### **Outside**

**Find shelter:**

- Try to stay dry
- Cover all exposed parts of the body

**If no shelter:**

- Prepare a lean-to, windbreak, or snow cave for protections from the wind
- Build a fire for heat and to attract attention
- Place rocks around the fire to absorb and reflect heat



## Find us on Social Media!

 @NWSIndianapolis

 US National Weather Service Indianapolis Indiana

## Send Us Your Reports

We need to know what's really going on where you are! Send us a tweet @NWSIndianapolis or comment on our Facebook page to let us know what type of precipitation is falling, how much snow you've measured, if there's any ice accumulation, or if you measure any strong wind gusts. Better yet, you can send us pictures or video to really show us what you're seeing! But don't forget to include your location and the time during which this took place.



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# Protecting life & property

## New this year: Snow Squall Warnings

### What is a Snow Squall?

An intense burst of snow and winds that can last 1 to 3 hours which can cause whiteout visibility and rapidly deteriorating road conditions.

### When will Snow Squall Warnings be issued?

They will be issued when a snow squall is occurring or happening in the near future. These warnings will cover a small targeted area and will typically be in effect for 30-60 minutes. Snow squall warnings will be similar to how tornado and severe thunderstorm warnings are issued.

### How can one stay safe during a snow squall?

Have a way to get forecasts and warnings. Consider an alternate route or delay travel plans. Watch out for rapidly changing road conditions, reduce driving speed and use low beam headlights if caught in a

snow squall.

### Do snow squalls occur in Indiana?

Yes! On January 31, 2013 in Plainfield, Indiana, a snow squall caused a 35 vehicle pile up that resulted in one death along I-70.

